

# **How to create a Social Media Strategy for an Event Management Company**

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<p>This thesis focuses on the preparation process of creating a social media marketing strategy for an event management company that does not have a marketing manager. Maximillion Events, the commissioner, is a small company with big business, based in Edinburgh, United Kingdom. The goal was to help the employees work on their social media communally and to give them a better understanding of the different platforms.</p> <p>For theoretical framework, the process of creating a social media marketing strategy is studied along with the nature of social media, with the help of industry literature. The SOSTAC® planning model was also studied to create a frame for the strategy. Different social media platforms are explained, with the main focus on Facebook and Twitter as they are the most important platforms for the company at present.</p> <p>The basis of this thesis was an extensive analysis into Maximillion's main competitors. The analysis includes both a quantitative and a qualitative part, where the competitors' actions, behaviour and success are studied.</p> <p>As well as an analysis, this thesis also includes an end product in the form of a guidebook. The guidebook explains the most important platforms in layman's simple terms, to make it easier to understand and act upon. The guidebook includes terminology, general tips of what could or should be posted and what the different platforms can be used for.</p> <p>This thesis was created with a relatively slow schedule, the whole process taking about a year, beginning in July 2015. The result of this process is a more extensive knowledge on Social Media Marketing for both the author and the commissioning party. It gives the commissioner relative means to create a more extensive strategy when they have the needed resources.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Social Media, Marketing, Strategy, Event Management, Competitor Analysis	

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# 1 Introduction

In this thesis, I dive into the world of social media, the most actual way of marketing in the current times – the early days of the twenty-first century. Social media has the ability to make a company more successful if it is used correctly. However, when not given enough attention and appreciation, it can be a pitfall for many a company who are struggling to be up to date in their marketing endeavours.

The objective of this thesis is to give the commissioner a structure and the means for creating an extensive social media marketing strategy. It will explain what is needed for a functioning strategy and how it can be created, along with introductions to the most popular social media platforms. Maximillion Events does not currently have a marketing manager and hence marketing, and especially social media marketing, has not received the attention and dedication it needs to be successful. The final step of this study is to create an easy-to-follow guidebook, where the theoretical framework of this thesis is put into a practical form, which can be used by anyone in the company in the absence of a marketing manager. The guidebook shall be easy for the commissioner to modify according to changing needs and objectives.

The basis and first step of this thesis is an extensive competitor analysis into the main competitors of Maximillion Events. The analysis includes both a quantitative and a qualitative part. The analysis was conducted by studying the main competitors' social media platforms; the quantity, quality, content and level of engagement of their posts. The analysis was performed in the summer of the year 2015, between the months of July and August, while I was working for the company on a work placement. A part of my responsibilities was social media marketing, which is when I realised it is not getting the attention it deserves and requires to be more than a chat platform for the company's employees.

The final product, a Social Media Marketing Guidebook, is based on not only the competitor analysis but also a theoretical study. Industry experts' views on creating a social media marketing strategy are taken into consideration and applied for the purpose of this study. By studying the theoretical aspects of each main social media platform, each platform's function and purpose is determined and later applied to practise to create a strategy. As each platform serves a different purpose and has a different audience, it must be clearly determined what should be posted, when and where. By following a functional strategy, the on-going final objective is to create a wider and more engaged social media audience for Maximillion Events, and thus generate more sales for the company.

First, the commissioner will be presented and their situation and objectives explained. Second, the theory chapter includes theory on how to create a social media marketing strategy, the nature of social media, the SOSTAC® process, and how each social media platform functions. Last, the competitor analysis will be explained. The end product can be found in the appendices.

## 2 Commissioner – Maximillion Events Ltd

Maximillion is an Event Management company, widely known in Scotland for being the longest-established and best regarded events business. Maximillion organises all types of events from treasure hunts to big corporate conferences. (Maximillion 2016.)

The company consists of five different parts as pictured in the figure below; Maximillion itself, whose focus is on Team Development, Roselle, which is responsible for meetings and conferences, private parties and theming, MadMax Adventures and Turnberry Adventures, which are both outdoor activity sites, and Wildgoose Scotland, which operates GPS-enabled treasure hunts. All these areas have their own managers in the company, and are managed from the Edinburgh Headquarters. Currently Maximillion only employs 9 full-time employees in the office, but the company is ever growing. In addition to the full-time members, Maximillion employs a range of freelance event team members. (Maximillion 2016.)

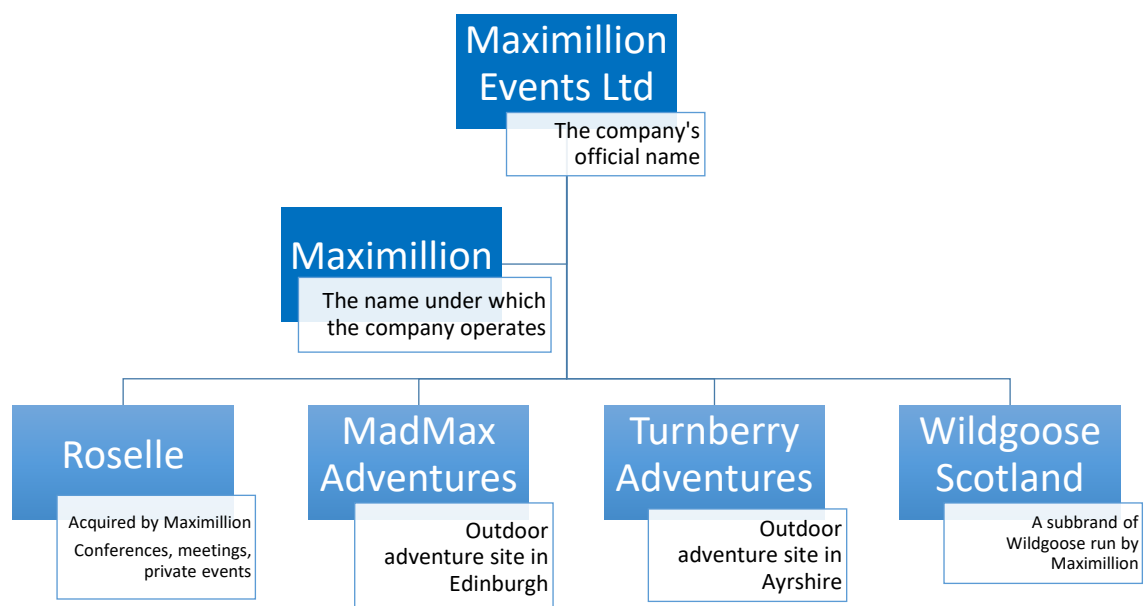


Figure 1 Maximillion Events' organisational chart. (Maximillion 2016.)

Maximillion's business idea and slogan is: "We're only happy when you're delighted!" - the company measures their success in this by collecting feedback from their events. Other key values for the company are sustainability and responsibility; every event is designed to be as green as possible, and the amount of wasted paper is kept to a minimum even within the office. The company has been recognised and won many an award for being sustainable and green. (Maximillion 2016.)

Maximillion Events has a well renowned clientele, with some of the biggest repeat customers being Hewlett-Packard, Chivas Brothers, the Royal Bank of Scotland, and Premier Oil. As the company is able to offer such a wide range of event styles to a variety of audiences, many of the clients bring repeat business in the form of a different, or even similar, event year after year. (Maximillion 2016.)

The Wildgoose treasure hunts are increasingly popular within a spectrum of clientele from hen dos to big corporate companies. MadMax Adventures attracts mainly, but not limiting to, stag dos. Turnberry Adventures is a higher end activity site, being located at the well-renowned Trump Turnberry resort, and thus attracts smaller groups and couples. Maximillion and Roselle's main audience is corporate. All areas of the business are referred to by agents and even other event businesses. (Maximillion 2016.)

Most of the events organised by Maximillion Events are within the United Kingdom, with the majority of them being in Scotland as that is where the headquarters is located. The company has, however, organised events also overseas in Europe. (Maximillion 2016.)

As determined with the company's current Business Development Manager at the time, Maximillion's key competitors, which were studied for the purposes of this thesis, are Team Challenge Company, Team Building Company, Blue Sky, Bluehat Group, Chillisauce, ABC Events and Conference care. All but Chillisauce are event management companies, Chillisauce being an agency, with whom Maximillion co-operates on a regular basis. All the competitors are based in the United Kingdom. (Maximillion 2016.)

Maximillion does not have a Marketing Manager or a full-time employee responsible for social media marketing, and thus that aspect has not received the attention it deserves. Hence the object of this thesis is to make it easier for all employees of the company to understand how social media works and is to be operated, and thereby make it possible for everyone to share the responsibility in the absence of a Marketing Manager. (Smith 16.8.2015.)

As explained in further detail in chapter 3.2, there is a planning model designed to help with planning a marketing strategy. This model, called SOSTAC®, is a tool used to analyse the process: from starting point to objectives and results. The first step of the model is situation, which for Maximillion is, as mentioned above, a small team with not much spare time on their hands and no marketing manager to lead the area of business. They also have plenty of competitors, but do not have trouble getting business regardless. For Maximillion the second step, objectives, means getting more visibility and business via social

media marketing, and in general to have a stronger presence in the modern world of social. Realising the following part, strategy, is studied in the following chapter. As for tactics and action, which are the strategy in more detail, they must be left as the company's own responsibility. This is due to the fact that in order to get into such detail, one would have to have access to all company data and be informed of all occurrences. The same goes for the last step of the list, control, as it means monitoring results and reaching goals, modifying them, and starting over again and again. (Smart Insights 2016a.)



### 3 Creating a Social Media Strategy

In this chapter are explained the key objects to which one needs to pay attention when creating a social media marketing strategy and how it differs from traditional marketing. Furthermore, an insight is given to all the most common social media platforms – how they function, what their main purpose is and who is using them.

#### 3.1 Creating a Social Media Marketing Strategy

There are many ways to define the word marketing, but one of the simplest definitions would be: *Marketing is engaging customers and managing profitable customer relationships* (Armstrong, Kotler & Opresnik 2016, 31). It has two main goals; to attract new customers by promising superior value and to keep and grow existing customers by delivering satisfaction. Unless one has a completely unique product or service, there is always competition and one must find ways to stand out from the crowd. Therefore, creating customer value is an important part of the process. One must familiarise themselves with their customer – who they are, what they need and want, and what ultimately motivates them to purchase one's products or services. Once this is known, one can target those incentives in their marketing strategies. For example, in the event industry the services are about experiences - sometimes even once in a life time experiences that many people dream about. Hence, it could be profitable to remind them that they can live those experiences through the services you provide. (Armstrong & al 2016, 31-33.)

When starting to create a social media marketing strategy, the two most important matters to consider are one, your audience, and two, your objectives. You need to look into and understand *who* your audience is, *where* they are, *when* they are active, and *what* they respond to. Therefore, conducting an extensive competitor analysis will get you to a good start. By comparing your key competitor's behaviour on social media and the response they get to that behaviour is key to understanding what has and what has not worked previously. However, you must not forget to think objectively and look at the big picture – these competitors might not be aware of their audience's needs and thus might not be a good example of what to do, and more so of what *not* to do. (Ryan 2015, 3-4.)

Defining your own objectives is just as important as finding and understanding your audience. Once you are aware of how your audience responds to different cues and how they behave on social media, knowing what you want to gain from social media marketing will help you narrow down your strategy. One might seek to drive awareness of their product or service and optimise sales conversion, while the other simply seeks to drive more traffic

to their website, create trust amongst their target group or create an additional platform for customer care. Integrating the company's future plans, be that three, five, seven or more years, into the strategy will make it more significant and will likely help the company to achieve the goals included. Marketing objectives should always be SMART:

- Specific – instead of using vague terms such as increase, improve or maximize, objectives should be expressed in terms of values
- Measurable - it should be possible to confirm whether they have been achieved or not
- Achievable – objectives you have the necessary resources for
- Realistic – although it is good to be ambitious, unrealistic targets are demotivating
- Time-bound – every objective should have a set timescale

Both short-term and long-term objectives are needed for a successful strategy. Objectives may and should change during the process when everything is studied and re-evaluated. (Ryan 2015, 3-4; Westwood 2016, 36.)

Objectives are what one wants to achieve, strategies are how one reaches said objectives. There are several different types of strategies: defensive strategies are designed to prevent losing existing customers, the aim of developing strategies is to offer a wider range of products or services to one's existing customers, and attacking strategies are meant for generating business through new customers. Different strategies have different risk levels, but the least risky way to try to expand one's business is with one's existing products in one's existing market – this is a good place to start from. (Westwood 2016, 56-57.)

### **3.2 SOSTAC®**

SOSTAC® is a planning model developed by PR Smith to help with marketing planning. The abbreviation stands for Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action and Control; the words are explained in the list below.



Figure 2 SOSTAC® process. (Smart Insights 2016a.)

The SOSTAC® list gives a logical order for planning and implementing a strategy for any kind of digital marketing. In the first step of the process, Situation, one must reflect on their status at the very beginning before any plans have been implemented. A good way to start is creating a SWOT-analysis (Table 1) to figure out one's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the marketplace. A competitor analysis is key for clarifying where you stand in relation to your competitors. (Smart Insights 2016a.)

Table 1 A SWOT-analysis for Maximillion

<b>Strengths</b> Strong position in marketplace Large variety of event styles Good dynamics in the office Many people to make an input	<b>Weaknesses</b> No marketing manager Not enough time for social media Lack of interest in dedicating time for social media
<b>Objectives</b> More visibility Increased reachability Increased sales	<b>Threats</b> Many competitors Falling behind due to inactivity on social media

In the Objective part of the planning system, PR Smith recommends to consider the 5 S's objectives; Sell – customer acquisition and retention targets, Serve – customer satisfaction targets, Sizzle – wow factor, Speak – engaging customers, and Save – quantified efficiency gains. By figuring all of one's objectives and knowing what one wishes to achieve

with their social media marketing, it is easier to start planning how to reach those goals. (Smart Insights 2016a.)

The Strategy part is the most difficult bit of the marketing plan process, but is vital for success. There are some strategic tools that can help in planning a strategy, but the one included in SOSTAC® is called the STOPP & SIT template – Segments, Target markets, Objectives, Positioning and Partners, and Sequence – credibility before visibility, Integrations and Tools. Different strategies may be needed when dealing with several market segments. (Smith 2011, 698, 705, 717 & 723.)

Tactics are the details of Strategy, and in this part one must consider the e-marketing mix, which includes the communications mix, social networking and what happens when. In the Tactics part of the process, one should plan what kind of content they want to publish in their platforms, and how and where they would like to be available for their customers to contact. (Smart Insights 2016a.)

Actions, for their part, are the details of Tactics, where one is to dive even deeper into executing the strategy. In this part of planning one must clarify who does what and when, whether the plan will be executed internally, externally or with a combination of both, and what systems and processes shall be used in the execution. (Smart Insights 2016a.)

The last stage of the SOSTAC® list, Control, is about finding out whether one is reaching the objectives they previously determined. The key to keep up to date with the process and to not lose track of whether the systems in place are working, it is better to monitor the process as often as is possible – quarterly, monthly, weekly, or even daily. The key points to pay attention to are sales forecasts and budget. In order to be prepared for difficulties, it is recommended to have contingency plans – for example in case an aggressive new competitor arrives or if one's audience reacts badly to a social media post. Many of the social media platforms have their own, free, monitoring and insight systems in place, but one can also purchase subscriptions for paid services such as Socialbakers, Synthesio or Brandwatch. (Ryan 2015, 43, 48; Smith 2011, 786, 798 & 835; Smart Insights 2016a.)

Once the SOSTAC® planning list has been completed, one must consider the three M's – the three key resources, which are Men, Money and Minutes. Men signifies human resource – expertise and abilities to do different jobs. Money mean budgets – whether one has the money to realise the plan. Minutes mean time – time scales, schedules and deadlines. (Smith 2011, 126.)

# The SOSTAC® Planning System

## HOW DO WE MONITOR PERFORMANCE?

### Optimising through:

5 S's, KPI's and web analytics  
User experience review  
Conversion rate optimisation  
Frequency of reporting  
Process of reporting and actions

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

### Marketplace SWOT:

5 S's performance and other KPI's (& trend)  
Customer insight (who, why, how?)  
Market Trends  
Competitor analysis  
Internal capabilities and resources

## WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

### 5 S's objectives:

**S**ell - customer acquisition and retention targets  
**S**erve - customer satisfaction targets  
**S**izzle - wow factor (added value)  
**S**peak - engaging customers  
**S**ave - quantified efficiency gains

## THE DETAILS OF TACTICS

### Who does what and when:

Responsibilities and structures  
Processes and systems  
Internal resources and skills  
External agencies

## HOW EXACTLY DO WE GET THERE?

### Marketing mix:

8 P's  
Incl. Communications Mix  
Content Plan  
Contact Plan

## HOW DO WE GET THERE?

### STOP & SIT:

Segments  
Target markets  
Objectives  
Positioning (OVP)  
&  
Sequence (Trust, Try, Buy...)  
Integration (CRM & D/Base)  
Targeting and segmentation



Picture 1. The SOSTAC® infographic created by PR Smith to visualise the planning system. (Smart Insights. 2016a.)

### **3.3 The Nature of Social Media**

Social media is a very new field of marketing, and many companies fail to understand the difference between it and regular, 'old-fashioned', marketing. While regular marketing is strongly based on advertising your product and generating sales by pushing it to potential customers, the key to social media marketing lies in its very name – social. It is highly unlikely that your audience will respond to you telling how good you are and simply advertising your range of products or services. Following the paradigm of advertising that was created twenty years ago and has not been adapted since will not get you far in the ever-evolving world of social. Social media is about adding value to customers' lives by giving them more relevant content and useful information - and less adverts. Customers need content that stimulates their emotions and makes them feel good. (Ryan 2015, 5-7.)

As anything on the internet and social media is very reachable and can be shared effortlessly, negative comments and reviews can quickly change a company's image. Social media has given a channel for word-of-mouth, or word-of-mouse, to spread multiple times faster and reach people outside one's circle. It does not help that people tend to give negative feedback more easily than positive feedback. Having a presence and being social allows the company to steer those conversations and perceptions in a way that suits them. It also gives the company an opportunity to reach out to their customers directly rather than having to wait for them to reach out to the company. (Ryan 2015, 5.)

### **3.4 Social Media Platforms**

In these subchapters are described the origins, functions and typical audiences of each of the most popular social media platforms. Facebook and Twitter are considered in more detail, as they are the most popular and relevant platforms, and the best to get started with when creating a functional social media presence.

In the below tables are the statistics for the main platforms (Table 2) and for the additional platforms (Table 3). Firstly, the form of the social media platforms is identified and categorised. Second, the main type of content is identified. The third row on the tables signify the amount of active monthly users in millions. These numbers were not available for all platforms. Furthermore, the cost of usage is specified, and ultimately, the availability of advertising.

Table 2 Statistics for the main platforms as of April 2016 (Smart Insights 2016b; Expanded Ramblings 2016a.)

Platform	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn	Google+	YouTube	Pinterest	Instagram
<b>Form</b>	Social Network	Microblog	Social Network	Social Network	Media Sharing	Bookmarking Site	Media Sharing
<b>Main use</b>	Pictures and text	Text	Text	Text	Videos	Pictures	Pictures
<b>Active users (m)</b>	1590	320	100	300	1000	100	400
<b>Cost of use</b>	free	free	free with paid subscriptions	free	free	free	free
<b>Advertising</b>	paid	paid	paid	paid	paid	paid	paid

Table 3 Statistics for the additional platforms as of April 2016 (Smart Insights 2016b; Expanded Ramblings 2016b-d.)

Platform	Snapchat	Tumblr	Blogger	Periscope	Vine	Flickr
<b>Form</b>	Real-time picture and video-sharing	Blog	Blog	Live video-sharing	Media Sharing	Media Sharing
<b>Main use</b>	Pictures	Pictures	Text	Video	Video	Pictures
<b>Active users (m)</b>	200	555	n/a	10	200	112
<b>Cost of use</b>	free	free	free	free	free	free
<b>Advertising</b>	paid	paid	paid	paid	paid	paid

### 3.4.1 Facebook

Facebook was founded in 2004 as a platform for Harvard University's students to communicate with each other. Being the most popular social media platform of the day, the amount of its daily users is reaching one billion. The company's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. (Facebook 2015a.)

For thousands of people around the world the first thing to do in the morning after opening their eyes is checking Facebook. In a way, it is replacing even traditional newspapers. As with newspapers, people will flick or scroll through the news and choose the articles that interest them most at that moment. Unlike with newspapers, with Facebook the person themselves is in control of what is shown in their newsfeed. If they find a page's posts uninteresting they can easily unfollow the page. Thus, it is crucially important for companies who want to succeed with their Facebook presence to produce interesting and engaging content. (Carvill & Taylor 2013, 89-109.)

Facebook can be used in a multitude of ways for a multitude of different purposes; customer support and service, lead generation, polling and product feedback, as a corporate



and social responsibility channel, news distribution, brand awareness and establishment, product and event promotion, gathering support for a cause, humanising your brand, research, competitions and check-in deals. For a functional presence, it is good for a company to use many, if not all, of these features in their Facebook marketing. If one only uses their Facebook channel for promoting their products or services, it is likely they will quickly get unfollowed by their audience who deem that uninteresting. By being social and humanising your brand, engaging with your audience and giving them something in return for their following in the form of competitions or giveaways, one has the chance of gaining popularity through content followers and word-of-mouth. (Carvill & Taylor 2013, 89-109.)

Different ways of posting on your Facebook page include the following; your own content for example in the form of a news article you have posted on your website, sharing someone else's content, asking questions, creating polls, observations - for example about products that could be useful for your audience, recommendations and reviews, talking about another page, and responding to comments publicly. It is easy to get lost in the constant feed of updates, and thus adding interesting visual content in the form of pictures or videos where appropriate is a good way to get your audience's attention. (Carvill & Taylor 2013, 89-109.)

### **3.4.2 Twitter**

Twitter was founded in 2006 and quickly became one of the most active social media platforms in the world, with currently about 500 million tweets sent in a day. The company's headquarters is in San Francisco, California. Their mission is to give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers. (Twitter 2016a&b.)

The main characteristic feature of Twitter is the way it limits the length of the messages, better known as tweets, to 140 characters. The fact that every tweet is no more than a sentence or two makes it easy for users to absorb a lot more in a shorter period. This also makes Twitter ideal for mobile users, who can scroll through their feed on the bus – or wherever they are – and thus keeps them updated on the go. Another key feature that separates Twitter from other platforms is its up-to-dateness. The shortness of the tweets makes it fast and easy to post, which explains the astounding volume of tweets sent in a day. Because of the vast number of tweets sent, the stream is constantly changing even if you only follow only a few users. Henceforth it is also easy to get your tweets lost in the stream. One way to up your game and stand out from the crowd is adding visual content to your tweets; photos, videos and GIFs that no longer lessen the character limit. (Carvill & Taylor 2013, 53-55.)



Twitter's versatility makes it the one channel that every company should have. Even if they are not posting on it themselves, it can be used for research and listening, and even as a search engine. Twitter receives around 2.1 billion queries per day, making it almost a Google-like platform of information. Hashtags, introduced by Twitter, are now a key ingredient in a standard tweet. They are used to indicate the keyword or words the tweet is focused on, making it even easier to pick your interests from the mix. If a tweet with a hashtag is posted from a public account, anyone can see the tweet when searching for that specific hashtag. That gives you the opportunity to take part in an on-going conversation that could potentially have millions of followers. Twitter showcases trending topics, the keywords that are currently being mentioned and talked about the most. (Ryan 2015, 22; Twitter 2016b.)

Twitter can be used for a variety of purposes including the following; customer support and service, brand reputation management, polling and product feedback, listening in and capturing conversations, news distribution, brand awareness, gathering support for a cause, humanising your brand, and targeting – there is not much you cannot do on Twitter. While it may seem a little confusing to a beginner, ultimately Twitter is very simple to use. In addition to searching and posting, one can retweet, quote, favourite and reply to other people's tweets. Retweeting means simply posting someone else's tweet on one's own feed under their name, while quoting gives one the opportunity to add one's own comment to it. By favouriting a tweet, one is simply saying one likes what one read, and by replying to it one can tell them just what it is one thinks about the tweet. One can choose the accounts they want to follow and thus see in their main feed. If two accounts follow each other, it gives them the opportunity to also send private messages out of sight from others. (Carvill & Taylor 2013, 55-64.)

### **3.4.3 LinkedIn**

LinkedIn, founded in 2003, is currently the world's largest professional network on the internet with more than 380 million users worldwide. Their company mission is to connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. (LinkedIn 2015f.)

What comes to social media platforms, LinkedIn is known as the more serious one, used for connecting businesses to other businesses and workers to previous, current and potential future colleagues and companies. LinkedIn enables employees to search for jobs, companies to search for employees, and companies to connect with each other. Per a study conducted by Hubspot, LinkedIn is three times more effective for lead generation

than Facebook and Twitter, which derives from the fact that LinkedIn is rarely used for entertainment, unlike other social media platforms. User profiles are heavily based on a CV-like format, with information on job history and other details relative to employability. Another way LinkedIn differs from other social media platforms is the fact that it offers paid subscriptions that can be useful for active users as they offer more specific searches and other special amenities. Users can post and share content to their connections, join groups to follow and participate in topic specific conversations and keep up to date with the companies or people they follow or are connected to. (Carvill & Taylor 2013, 133-153.)

#### **3.4.4 Google+**

Google+ was introduced in 2011 with the aim to bring the nuance and richness of real-life sharing to the web, and making all of Google better by including people, their relationships and their interests. (Google+ 2015e) As of early 2015, the platform had more than 2.5 billion users, but according to studies, only 9% of them were active and only 1.49% of them had made more than 5 public posts. (Tech Times 2016.)

On Google+ individuals and companies can connect with and follow other individuals and companies. Google+ has not succeeded to become a popular social networking platform, as the previously mentioned statistics clearly suggest. However, companies can get a lot out of using Google+, even if they do not have a large following. The main advantage of using the platform is that by posting keyword-rich content, a company will be rewarded with a higher visibility on Google than they would by posting on other social media platforms. In other words, the company will show up higher up in Google searches relative to their most common keywords. Hence having a profile on Google+ can be productive if the company is after higher visibility and looking to make themselves known in the market. (Carvill & Taylor 2013, 179.)

#### **3.4.5 YouTube**

YouTube was launched in 2005 and bought by Google in 2006. The video sharing platform has more than 1 billion users and every day, hundreds of millions of hours of footage are being watched generating billions of views. Every minute 300 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube. The platform provides a forum for people to connect, inform and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small. (YouTube 2016a&b.)

YouTube is the most popular video-sharing platform in the world. As it is owned by Google, well keyworded videos can increase visibility on its search engine and thus make a company more successful. In the modern world where most people own a mobile device with a camera, anyone can film, create and publish a video. However, for a video to be effective in marketing a product or a service, it requires an original idea, planning and most likely a professional's help. Even if a company is not looking to get fame and fortune through their videos and simply use them to visually describe their products to potential buyers, they still need to be of high quality to make a good impression. While there are free and paid applications and websites, for example Animoto, where anyone can edit and create videos, it requires a fair amount of skill and creativity to produce a video that is both visually and informationally satisfying for viewers. (Carvill & Taylor 2013, 115-122.)

Different types of videos a company can create and post on YouTube include the following; promotional films, testimonials and interviews with customers, interviews with staff, short 'how-to' films, humoristic videos about dry subjects, press releases and video blogs, thought leadership, podcasts and vodcasts, answering frequently asked questions, 'about us' videos, and sales. Companies can also create adverts that are played before other users' videos. (Carvill & Taylor 2013, 115-122.)

#### **3.4.6 Pinterest**

Pinterest was founded in 2010 and is a visual bookmarking tool that helps people discover and save creative ideas. (Pinterest 2016) Pinterest currently, as of September 2016, has 100 million users, out of which 85% are female users. The users of the platform have so far created 50 billion pins and 1 billion boards. Around 1.5 trillion pin recommendations are served annually on Pinterest. (DMR 2016.)

On Pinterest, users can share, curate and discover new interests by pinning pictures on the boards they have created or even public, shared boards. It is an excellent way of showcasing a company's visual and creative side by using their own pictures or pictures from other websites. The boards can be a way of listing one's interests or a mood board for a certain topic. As with most other social media platforms, the use of keywords and hashtags is essential for placing the pictures in the right context and for users to find one's posts through using those keywords. Pinterest can be used for showcasing thought leadership, humanising a brand, showcasing events one has attended or hosted, sharing videos, and social search by means of hashtagging. (Carvill & Taylor 2013, 181-185.)

### **3.4.7 Instagram**

Instagram was founded in 2010 and bought by Facebook in 2012. It is a mobile photo sharing application with over 400 million monthly active users and more than 80 million pictures shared daily. Their mission is to allow their users to experience moments in their friends' lives through pictures as they happen – “We imagine a world more connected through photos.” (Instagram 2015c&d.)

Instagram is a social networking application that allows users to edit and share their pictures. The application has a variety of readymade filters that users can apply to their photographs to make them more visually pleasing. It also offers the alternative to edit the photographs from start to finish as much or as little as the person likes by changing some of the key features like contrast and brightness. Instagram is planned for and mainly used on mobile devices, while viewing the pictures is also possible on their website. Hashtags are an essential way to get one's pictures noticed by people outside of one's following. With its sole focus on sharing pictures and videos, Instagram is another good platform to showcase a company's visual and creative side. (Webwise 2016.)

### **3.4.8 Other popular platforms**

Snapchat is a photo and video sharing platform. Its main idea, and unique quality, is that the pictures and videos can only be viewed for up to 10 seconds, after which they disappear unless a screenshot is taken. Users can also post their content as their story, where each post remains for 24 hours unless deleted by the user. (Snapchat 2016.)

Tumblr is a modern blogging platform where users can easily share all types of media; text, photos, quotes, links, chats, audio and video. Users can also easily reply, reblog or like other users' posts. By using keywords as hashtags, which appear at the bottom of the posts, one can make it easy for others to find the posts even if they are not following them. (Tumblr 2016.)

Blogger is a blogging platform owned by Google, and therefore has a big impact on a company's SEO and visibility on Google, hence making it useful to post news articles there and also the best option for marketers who want to generate sales. Blogger is a more traditional blogging service where the main focus is on text articles with other media supporting it where desired. One can design the layout and style of their blog freely by using the extensive design back page. (Blogger 2016a&b.)

Periscope is a live video-sharing mobile application, where users can broadcast video straight from their mobile devices in real time to their followers. Periscope users choose the accounts they want to follow and whose broadcasts they want to get notified about. The broadcasts include a comment section, where viewers can comment as they are watching the video – the broadcaster can also see the comments and thus interact with viewers. (Periscope 2016.)

Vine is a video-sharing platform used on mobile devices, where users can post short, 6-second videos that play on a loop until the viewer moves on to another video. People can choose who they want to follow, search for videos using keywords, and watch popular videos that are featured on the front page. Since this thesis was started, Vine has stopped operating. (Vine 2016.)

Flickr is an online photo management and sharing application where people can share photos both publicly and privately. Flickr gives its users 1000 GB of free storage, making it a good way to keep one's pictures safe. The application is popular among professional photographers and people searching for photographs, but it can be simply used as a place to share larger quantities of photographs at once – professional or not. (Flickr 2016.)

## **4 Competitor Analysis & Product**

To investigate where the company stands in relation to its competitors in the market field, it is essential and highly useful to conduct a competitor analysis. The analysis allows the company to study what, how, when and where the competitors have been doing so far, and how well that has been working for them. This will then give an insight into what might work and what might not, and thus will give a basis for the strategy. (6D Global 2016.)

### **4.1 Competitor Analysis**

As a basis for this project I conducted an extensive competitor analysis on Maximillion Events' competitors' social media platforms and behaviours. I chose seven of Maximillion's most relevant competitors with a social media presence and investigated which platforms they were using and how. The seven most popular platforms on which this study is focused are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, Pinterest and Instagram. In addition to these platforms, I made a note of any others they had a profile in.

#### **4.1.1 Quantitative Analysis**

Quantitative analysis is an analysis that aims to understand or predict behaviour or events through mathematical measurement and calculations, statistical modelling and research. The objects are studied and results presented in numerical values. The main advantage of conducting a quantitative analysis is that it involves studying precise, definitive values that can easily be compared with each other. (Investopedia 2016a.)

For the quantitative part (Tables 4-6) of the competitor analysis I studied how many followers the competitors had on each social media platform and how many posts they have made either in a certain period or in the entire history of their presence there. I searched for each competitor on each platform, or used the links on their websites. For Facebook, I thought the most relevant way of analysing the quantity of their posts was by defining how many posts they had per week within the last five weeks, whereas with Twitter I thought it relevant to see how many of the tweets were their own content and how many were re-tweets. As the other platforms were considerably less active, I counted the total number of posts.

Table 4 Quantitative analysis, the main platforms. (Facebook 2015b-h; Twitter 2015a-g; LinkedIn 2015; Google+ 2015a-d&f-h.)

	*last 5 wks average			*last month (June, own\retweets)				*all posts			*all posts		
Company	Facebook	Likes	Posts pw*	Twitter	Followers	Following	Posts*	LinkedIn	Followers	Posts*	Google+	Followers	Posts*
1 Team Challenge Comp.	x	693	2	x	1950	2095	16, 9\7	x	279	9	x	9	0
2 Team Building Comp.	x	1307	5	x	2466	268	39, 31\8	x	530	0	x	11	9
3 Blue Sky	x	550	1	x	881	856	33, 29\4	x	81	9	x	4	17
4 Bluehat Group	x	410	1	x	2119	287	24, 11\13	x	1050	35	x	20	6
5 Chillisauce	x	6972	2	x	4056	2139	33, 7\26	x	2224	5	x	132	97
6 ABC	x	934	3	x	470	1041	36, 24\12	x	29	1	x	0	1
7 Conference care	x	120	1	x	3221	240	42, 17\25	x	1017	49	x	25	6
Maximillion		557			1103	700			209			4	

As shown in Table 4, all the competitors had a profile on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ - the main platforms. On Maximillion's part, the table only shows the number of followers on each platform to have a reference point. On Facebook, the average follower/like count is about 1,500, which is elevated by Chillisauce's considerably larger number of followers. If this is not taken into account, the average number is 669. On Twitter the competitors' average follower count was 2,099. LinkedIn's average was 744 followers, and Google+'s 29 – considerably lower than the other channels. The green colour on the follower counts indicates that the number is higher than Maximillion's. The blue colour on the numbers of Twitter following indicates that the competitor follows more people than it is followed by, which would suggest they are fishing for followers by following others.

Activity-wise the numbers show that the average number of posts per week on Facebook was 2. On Twitter the competitors made on average 32 tweets in June 2015, out of which, on average, 18 were original tweets and 14 retweets. The average total of posts on LinkedIn was 15, which was slightly elevated by Bluehat Group's and Conference Care's larger numbers. Amongst the others, the average was a mere 10 posts in total. As for Google+ the number varied between 0 and 97. The average with Chillisauce's 97 included was 19, and 7 with it excluded.

Table 5 Quantitative analysis, other common platforms. (YouTube 2015a-d; Pinterest 2015a&b; Instagram 2015a&b.)

Company	YouTube	Subscribers	Videos	Pinterest	Followers	Boards	Instagram	Followers	Posts
1 Team Challenge Comp.	x	172	30	x	145	33			
2 Team Building Comp.									
3 Blue Sky	x	13	33				x	13	14
4 Bluehat Group	x	39	31						
5 Chillisauce	x	167	45	x	100	6	x	373	120
6 ABC									
7 Conference care									
Maximillion		9			16				

On the platforms shown in Table 5, two or more competitors had a presence. These platforms are YouTube, Pinterest and Instagram. The average subscriber/follower counts are 98, 123 and 193, respectively. These numbers are less accurate as there were less competitors to contribute to the average.

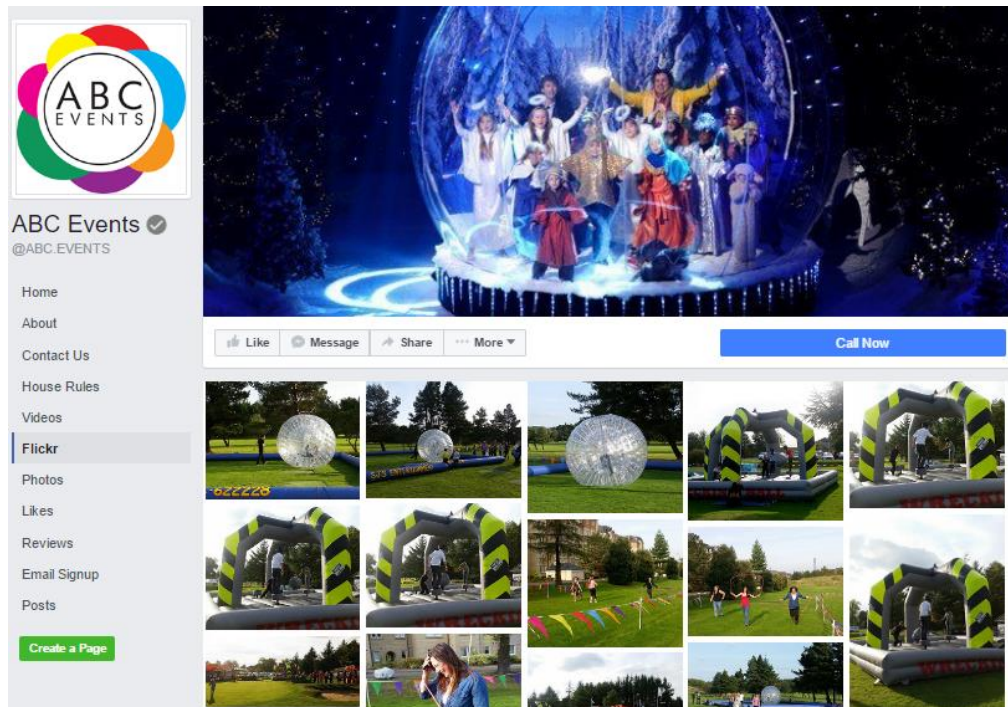
The number of videos posted on YouTube was on average 35, which all the competitors are very close to individually. The activity numbers on Pinterest and Instagram varied more, but as they had only two users out of the seven, an average would not be useful.

Table 6 Quantitative analysis, additional platforms that were added if one of the competitors had a presence in them. Tumblr was added by myself. (Facebook 2015b; Flickr 2015; Tumblr 2015; Vine 2015.)

		Additional						
	Company	Blog	Flickr	Followers	Vine	Followers	Videos	Tumblr
1	Team Challenge Comp.		<a href="#">x</a>	25				
2	Team Building Comp.	<a href="#">x</a>						
3	Blue Sky	<a href="#">x</a>						
4	Bluehat Group	<a href="#">x</a>			<a href="#">x</a>	2	6	
5	Chillisauce	<a href="#">x</a>						
6	ABC		<a href="#">x*</a>	~				
7	Conference care	<a href="#">x</a>						
	Maximillion			3				
	* on their Facebook page as a tab							

The additional platforms specified on Table 6, a blog, Flickr, Vine and Tumblr were again less popular among the competitors. The blogs were not all on Blogger or any other separate blogging platform, but for some it was the news page on their website or a blog on another platform. Two of the competitors had a presence in Flickr, and ABC had cleverly integrated theirs into their Facebook page, as shown in Picture 2 below.





Picture 2 ABC Events' Facebook page where Flickr is integrated (Facebook 2016a)

#### 4.1.2 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis uses subjective judgement based on unquantifiable information – instead of using numerical measurements, the subject is studied and results are presented in a more abstract form with words. Qualitative analysis deals with intangible, inexact concerns that cannot be measured with numbers. While a quantitative analysis focuses on measuring things, a qualitative analysis is conducted to understand them. (Investopedia 2016b.)

For the qualitative part I chose six of the most relevant questions to further analyse how they were using their social media platforms and what their actual engagement looked like. Focusing mainly on Facebook and Twitter I studied what the companies were posting about and how relevant it was to the business, how their platforms were presented visually, what types of media had been used, which platforms were linked on their websites and what the actual engagement was like. There are two reasons for choosing these two platforms: first, they are the most popular ones and hence, second, will be the best ones for Maximillion to start with. To further investigate the engagement, I picked their most engaging posts from both Facebook and Twitter and analysed them to see what type of posts had been most successful in engaging the audience.

Firstly, when looking for the competitors' social media platforms, I paid attention to how they were presented on their websites. All seven of the competitors had Facebook and Twitter links and five out of seven had LinkedIn links. Meanwhile, only one had linked their Google+ account on their website, even though they all had a profile on it. Three out of four YouTube users had also linked their YouTube account with the others. One competitor, ABC Events, had not used the social media platforms' icons when linking them to their page, which made it considerably harder to find them.

All or most of the content on all competitors' social media pages was about the company. Most of the posts were either about the events the companies had organised or about the employees of the company. People based posts proved to be the most engaging ones, which makes one doubt whether the audience is mostly friends and families of the people in the photos. Only Bluehat Group and Chillisauce had ventured outside of the company-related posts, and had shared general industry news, which I found to be popular while working on the commissioner's social media during my internship.

Next, I observed the competitors' visual presentation on the platforms. All companies had simplified logos as their profile pictures, but only ABC Events and Conference Care (Pictures 3 & 4) had the names on them, which made them self-explanatory.



Picture 3 ABC Events' logo and Conference Care's logo (Facebook 2016b)

These logos shown in Pictures 3 and 4 make the companies feel more approachable and easier for prospective clients to find them on social media. They leave the need for interpretation, as they explain what type of company is in question.



Picture 4 Conference Care's logo (Facebook 2016c)

The other logos do not give any indication about what the companies do, which I thought to be a hindrance, as a self-explanatory logo is more likely to grab a viewer's attention from the mix, especially if they are thinking about matters that are related to the wording, such as events or conferences. That inspired me to plan a new logo for Maximillion's social media platforms (Picture 5)



Picture 5. An illustration of my idea for a new social media logo for Maximillion. The final product would require professional help, and the use of the right fonts. The swirl on the background is taken from Maximillion's official logo, and is already used on its own.

Content-wise, the competitors agreed on one matter – photos. Some had one or more photos in all their posts on Facebook, and all of them had used photos regularly. Sharing links seemed to also be a popular form of media used. Four out of five competitors had included videos in their feeds. Often, they had realised the importance of keeping the text parts short. As mentioned previously, the clear majority of the posts were directly relative to the companies.

The most important and revealing part of the qualitative analysis was engagement – do large numbers of followers automatically lead to more engagement? The answer was no; the competitors with the most number of likes and followers had no more engagement

than the others. When searching for the most engaging posts, it became clear that photos of the companies' employees on them were most popular. In Picture 6 below is an example of a most engaging post on Facebook, and in Picture 7 is one from Twitter.



Picture 6. A screenshot of a Facebook post that had received the most amount of engagement. The post was made by Bluesky Experiences and is about one of their employees celebrating their 10-year anniversary. (Facebook 2015d.)



ABC Events @ABCEventsLtd · Jul 13

A big welcome to @hannahspacey1 our  
new Business Development Exec!  
#buzzing #eventprof #Team #weareABC



Picture 7. A screenshot of one the most engaging tweets. It was posted by ABC Events, and is about their new employee. The employee has been tagged in the tweet, and several hashtags have also been used, which makes the tweet more accessible. (Twitter 2015a.)

## 4.2 Product

In addition to this thesis being based on research, it also resulted in a product – a Social Media Marketing Guidebook for the commissioner, Maximillion. This can be found in the appendices part at the end of this report. In order to make this thesis more convertible into reality and practise, I thought creating a product like this was essential and would perfectly represent the thesis in a more practical form. The product, in this case a guidebook, is much easier for the commissioning party to understand and is in a more compact form with just the necessary information.

I created the guidebook based on the information I gathered from my experience as an intern, from the competitor analysis I conducted, and the theoretical framework. It was created on Microsoft Office Publisher, which allowed me to make it both functional and visually pleasing. To increase functionality and legibility, I separated each topic into pages and, furthermore, into boxes with headlines. This makes it easy to find whatever it is that the reader is looking for.



The guidebook includes some general information on and rules for social media marketing: tips and hints, and dos and don'ts. In addition to the general guidelines, each platform is presented – for Facebook and Twitter, the main focus platforms, this means that their terminology and functions are explained, and some advice on how to use them given. For the additional platforms; LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram and Google+, some general advice is given. This all is explained in simple terms for it to be easily understood. There is also a page on Hootsuite, a platform managing service that Maximillion already has a subscription for. It explains what Hootsuite is and how best to use it.

### **4.3 Reflection**

The competitor analysis was extensive enough to give a clear representation of what was happening in social media, what had been done previously and what had worked. It was important to conduct both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis to see the correlation between numbers and activity, which was not a large one. It enabled me to get a deeper insight of what the competitors' audiences like and how they behave. The study indicated that everyone seemed to be struggling with their social media accounts. Some had been able to gather a larger audience, but even the ones with a follower count multiple times bigger than others, had little to no engagement on their posts. That seems to indicate that either no one has found the right way to reach the right audience, or the audience just simply is not there.

However, when you take into consideration the low engagement counts on Twitter, the most active platform, one is left to wonder if the target audience is on social media at all. I would like to believe that no one has just found the right way to reach and treat the target audience for event companies, maybe not even having studied and defined what it is. Based on the analysis, one would have to find a completely new way of using their social media platform. It also raised a question whether any of the competitors had an experienced person, or a team, in charge of social media marketing, the results indicating a small possibility for it.

Based on my own experience on social media, I was not surprised to find out that few competitors had a presence on Instagram, Pinterest, Vine and Tumblr, as they have a much younger audience than the aforementioned, more popular platforms. However, I believe that with finding the right way to use these platforms, they would have a large amount of potential in reaching a whole new audience and keeping the old one interested. Often, when companies are looking to organise events, it is the personal assistants, who are mainly female, who are responsible for finding an organiser.

One observation I made was the positive effect of simplified, but self-explanatory visuals; logos with text on them and even photos where text had been added on top to create a clearer message. They seemed much more attention grabbing compared to the other pictures that were of mediocre quality. Furthermore, some competitors had typos and grammatical errors in their posts, which gave an unprofessional impression.

There was not a large amount of variety in content, which indicates that the companies were not experimenting on their social media. It seemed they were only using social media to try and keep up with the modern world, but were not giving it enough attention to make it successful.

The product, a Social Media Marketing Guidebook, is in my opinion a successful and ideal representation of this thesis. The product will be introduced to the commissioner via email, with the recommendation to print it into guidebook form and distribute it to all office staff and event managers in order to encourage everyone to take part in the company's social media marketing. As and when the company evolves in their social media marketing endeavours, they can update the guidebook if they feel it is still necessary. In case they have a marketing manager at that point, they can modify it to give advice on what kind of content the event managers and team members can supply to them.

The simplistic format of the guidebook is ideal for this situation where there are several people with different levels of understanding involved – everything is easy to find and understand. The guidebook could easily be modified to represent other companies' needs that are in a similar situation. As social media is a relatively new occurrence, and the majority of the working population is more mature and hence likely not up to date with all the functions and possibilities, this kind of a guidebook could be useful for many.

## 5 Discussion

I started this process during my internship by having a meeting with Maximillion's current Business Development Manager to discuss what would be good to include in the competitor analysis. We defined Maximillion's key competitors and what should be paid attention to when studying them. I conducted most of the study over a period of around two months, at work and at home when I had time. In hindsight, it would have been better to fully dedicate bigger lumps of time for it to be able to conduct it within a shorter period, hence making it more consistent. In other words, it would have been ideal to complete the process without having to work simultaneously.

The analysis turned very well in the end and in my opinion it is very extensive and includes everything it could or should. It gives a very good indication of the competitors' activity and success on social media, and was a very good basis for the thesis. I had extensive knowledge on social media before starting the process, thus the fact of not having a theoretical framework to base the analysis on did not have a negative effect, in my opinion. The fact that the research includes both a quantitative and a qualitative part was essential to understand the situation fully.

After completing the analysis, I started looking for a theoretical framework for the strategy. I found the theory, and especially the referenced literature, interesting, although I felt that a lot of it I already knew due to previous experience and education. The SOSTAC® part was added rather late in the process, as per my teacher's request, and was slightly difficult to integrate into the rest of the thesis. However, I feel it was an important part of the process to give the company analysis a basis, and to give the company a planning model for their strategy. It was difficult to find literature that was up to date, preferably published in 2015 or 2016, which was important as social media is changing fast. The four physical books that I used for this thesis were the only ones I could find and get my hands on that I considered trustworthy, up-to-date, sources. They both offered a lot of valuable information, but in order to get a more extensive basis, I used many websites and a couple of eBooks as well.

With social media, and marketing in general, so much depends on the type, industry and resources of the company, so having worked with Maximillion for several months helped me focus on the right things and look at the process from the right perspective. Creating a detailed strategy would however be a job for someone who worked for the company full time, as it is ever changing and needs constant dedication. For that reason, the guidebook form is suitable for Maximillion as they are not yet ready and able to employ someone for



the specific job, and are instead carrying the weight communally. It explains in simple terms what each of the most common and suitable platforms are meant for, how they function, and what Maximillion should do on each of them. I decided to create the guidebook regardless of the fact that this thesis started as a research study, because I felt it was the right way to represent the results of the thesis in a more practical form..

My thesis writing process lasted for over a year in the end, not due to it being difficult, but for several complications within the process. The most significant issue the lack of a deadline, which resulted in lack of motivation. Another major problem was insufficient time, as I was working at the same time, hence not being able to dedicate my time to it fully. I feel that the lack of support from both peers and teachers, mostly due to living abroad, influenced my motivation, and in part made the process harder and slower. I did not take part in any thesis sessions and discussions, and only received instructions and comments via email. I do not feel the long working period affected the quality of the product significantly, but it certainly made the process more difficult.

By completing this project, I learned more about social media marketing, and especially to think about it subjectively through a company's eyes. I believe this process in addition to my already established knowledge of social media platforms would give me a good basis to work in social media marketing, which I have an interest for – now more than ever.

At the time of completing this thesis, the company has had some major changes in staff. They currently have a new Business Development Manager, and two other positions have been refilled, meaning I no longer have such a good understanding of the dynamics within the team, nor is the original commissioning employee present. Although I am still connected to the company by freelance work on events, I feel I have distanced myself from the company in comparison to the beginning of this process. However, the situation in regards to social media marketing remains the same, if not worse – their social media presence since mine and my colleague's departure, has reduced significantly. This only means there is even more need for my input in the form of this thesis and the end product.

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## Appendices



### **8 Commands of Social Media**

1. Start with only a couple of platforms
2. Figure out what you want to achieve
3. Specify your target audience, find it, and go there
4. Dedicate time and effort for it
5. Learn from mistakes — yours and others'
6. Optimise for search — use hashtags and keywords
7. Learn to understand Social Media
8. Include Social Media in everyday business and thinking



#### **DOs**

- Be humane
- Be SOCIAL
- Be active, listen
- Be proactive
- Dedicate time for it
- Keep up to date
- Investigate
- Use humour

#### **DON'Ts**



- Sell, sell, sell
- Boast
- Try doing what you can't handle
- Underestimate
- Be dry
- Do typos or grammatical errors
- Let quality suffer

### **Tips and Hints**

- Social Media marketing does not follow the same guidelines as traditional marketing
- Social Media is ever-changing and ever-evolving so it is important to stay up-to-date
- Keep an eye on your competition
- Mostly individuals use Social Media for observing, companies just for posting - keep this in mind when defining your target audience
- People want to see a humane side of companies on Social Media, leave LinkedIn and traditional marketing methods for more professional, serious B2B marketing
- Events are fun — give a fun image of the company!
- Originality has much more potential for greater results than following in others' unsuccessful footsteps
- Seek followers — find them rather than waiting for them to find you
- Be communicative, take part in conversations even outside your own platforms in groups and trending topic chains
- Changing the logo for Social Media so that it is self-explanatory & attention grabbing could be useful (below is an example of what could be done)



# facebook

## Terminology

- ♦ **Pinning:** you can pin one post at a time at the top of your page to draw more attention to it and for it to be the first thing people see when visiting your page
- ♦ **Insights:** a built-in tool which allows you to monitor your posts' success
- ♦ **Reach:** how many people have seen the post
- ♦ **Engagement:** likes, comments, shares
- ♦ **Hashtags:** # keywords that can be searched for and a way of highlighting the topic of your post
- ♦ **Trending:** Facebook shows a collection of trending topics based on what is mentioned or which hashtags are used the most at the moment

## Tips

- ♦ Use visual content to get more attention — even if you just want to share a text you can always add a photograph or a related picture from Google, just search with a keyword
- ♦ Be proactive — make yourself known by taking part in conversations on industry pages and groups, like related pages etc.
- ♦ Proofread your text before posting — typos and grammatical errors give a bad impression
- ♦ Post about once or twice a week, not more, not less

## What can Facebook be used for?

- ♦ Customer support and service
  - ♦ Lead generation
- ♦ Polling and product feedback mechanism
- ♦ Corporate and social responsibility channel
  - ♦ News distribution
- ♦ Brand awareness and establishment
  - ♦ Product and event promotion
- ♦ Gathering support for a cause
  - ♦ Humanising your brand
    - ♦ Research
    - ♦ Competitions

## What to post on Facebook?

- Your own content; *Maximillion's news articles, opinion pieces by staff members*
- Share someone else's content; *industry related news articles, suppliers' content, etc*
- Ask a question; *engage with your audience by asking for their opinions*
- Polling; *narrowing down the answer options can give you useful and constructive data*
- Observations; *pass comment on subjects that could interest your audience*
- Recommendations; *showcase recommendations you have been given or publicly praise staff members*
- Talk about another page; *mention a supplier's or venue's page or post about an engaging page that might be of interest to your audience*
- Respond to comments; *Facebook is about conversations, being social. Respond to comments on your page and take part in conversations elsewhere*

# twitter

## Terminology

- ♦ **Pinning:** pin an important tweet at the top of your page to make it the first one people see
- ♦ **Hashtag:** Twitter's main fuel, DO use them and use them wisely. #eventprofs #events #hospitality are some popular ones in the industry
- ♦ **Trending topics:** hashtags contribute to the ever-changing trending topics that you can select to be shown worldwide or by country
- ♦ **Reply:** you can reply to other's tweets by clicking the arrow icon, they will be notified and the tweet will show in your feed
- ♦ **Retweet:** you can post someone else's tweets just as is, or add your own comment with it, by clicking the double arrow
- ♦ **Favourite:** by clicking the heart you can like others' tweets. They will be notified and the tweet stays in your log
- ♦ **Embed:** you can share your tweet on your website in a visually pleasing way
- ♦ **Mute:** if you are getting unwanted tweets from someone you can mute them. They will not know you've done this but you won't see their tweets anymore
- ♦ **Block:** a more drastic measure of stopping someone from tweeting you. They will get notified and won't be able to tweet at you anymore

## What can you use Twitter for?

- ♦ Customer support and service
- ♦ Polling and product feedback
- ♦ Listening in, capturing conversations and sales leads
  - ♦ News distribution
  - ♦ Brand awareness
- ♦ Gathering support for a cause
  - ♦ Humanising your brand
    - ♦ Targeting

## What to tweet about

- ♦ Monthly/weekly mention; *I started a "#venue of the week" tweet that I posted every Thursday. This could be a mention of the week instead to get more variety and options. Mention suppliers, venues, clients etc.*
- ♦ Tasteful puns and jokes
- ♦ Observations
- ♦ Events
- ♦ Sharing own content from website
- ♦ Retweets; *industry experts, bloggers, related & unrelated tweets*
- ♦ Having a chat with someone, comment, question
- ♦ Opinions on trending topics

## Tips

- ♦ Put the accounts you follow into lists (already a few exist) to make it easier to find what you are looking for. You can observe a list's feed excluding all the others. E.g. make a list of industry experts and industry news — and retweet!
- ♦ Post several times a week — one tweet per day is a good aim

## LinkedIn

- You don't need to stay as active on LinkedIn as you do on Facebook and Twitter, but do keep your profile up to date
- LinkedIn is a professional platform connecting you to other businesses and operating partners. Share professional content that could be of interest to them
- Be human, in the end you are still communicating with humans
- Post job vacancies, LinkedIn is commonly used for job search
- Don't spam or try direct selling, LinkedIn is also a social platform
- Take part in conversations - there are many groups you can join
- Link all employees to the company profile, they have their own networks who will then find you more easily
- Check your insights regularly to see what is happening on your page, what works and what doesn't
- Connect actively to your personal connections to create a bond, be able to connect to them and to keep up to date on their work activity

## YouTube

- If you create videos, create them well. Get a professional or a skilled person to film and edit the videos to make sure they are of high quality
- Don't use copyrighted music or you will most likely get a copyright strike
- Share your videos on your other social media platforms
- Use keywords and caption your videos cleverly – YouTube is largely used as a search engine
- In addition to promotional videos and product descriptions, you can
  - film testimonials or interviews with customers or staff
  - Make how-to videos
  - Use humour to talk about a dry subject
  - Do video press releases or video blogs, "vlogs"
  - Answer FAQs
- Keep the channel regularly updated, a video a month would be a good aim

## Pinterest

- Pinterest is mainly used by females to search for inspiration and ideas
- Pinterest is very visual, it's main content being pictures, and thus it is a good platform to share photos of themed events etc. that are visually pleasing
- Making boards for different themes and categories makes it more organised, e.g. hen parties, a certain theme (Christmas, James Bond) etc.
- Use keywords to make the pictures easier to find
- Pinning is fast and easy so pin as you go! (Nice pictures on websites, pin the pictures from your website)

## Instagram

- Instagram is the same as Pinterest in that it is mainly used by females, is all about pictures, and can be used for the same purposes
- Instagram is mobile based, so snap pictures in events and edit and share them when you have a moment (an event iPad would be a good idea as I suggested)
- Use hashtags, they are very important on Instagram
- Do try to make an effort to take good, visually pleasing pictures
- Don't go overboard on the editing, if the photo speaks for itself, don't edit at all or change for example just brightness and contrast to make it clearer

## Google+

- Google+ is good for your SEO and Google visibility
- Keep your profile up to date
- Post every now and then but don't be too concerned about it, as in reality hardly anyone uses or checks their Google+, hence making it hard to gain anything else than SEO leads
- That might change in the future so do keep your eyes and ears open and keep up to date
- Share news articles from your website or elsewhere
- Keep the content professional as with LinkedIn but do not make it too dry, be human
- Be proactive and look for people or companies to connect with every now and then, then share and respond to their content
- Even if you are stuck with what to post, go look at your feed and like and comment on what others are posting, it's all about being social after all



- As you already have a Hootsuite account, make the most of it
- From Hootsuite you can control all your social media accounts and keep track of
  - What, when and where you have been posting
  - When and where you have been mentioned
  - Direct messages
- You can search simultaneously on all platforms for keywords or names or phrases — listen!
- You can track keywords
- You can create list similarly as on Twitter
- Most importantly, you can schedule your posts on all platforms. This way when you have an idea, you can add it to the queue and keep the stream constant
- This also allows you to schedule a time you can dedicate to social media instead of having to do it every day
- Hootsuite makes it easier for everyone to participate and keep up to date on what is happening
- Make it a part of the weekly brief banter to discuss social media and encourage everyone to actively think of ideas and participate in activity

Source: Creating a Social Media Strategy for an Event Management Company, Elna Leskinen, 2016